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THE ORATORIO.

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN.

[Continued.]

WE will add now a few remarks on the intrinsic character of the Oratorio, and its differences from the related kinds of music. The name is totally insignificant of the thing,* and the description of its character is therefore generally taken from the general character of the chief compositions that go under that name; and, therefore, at different periods, we have a different definition of the Oratorio. It was for a long time a popular theatrical representation of religious subjects, interspersed with music and dancing. When it first began to be refined, the dramatic element remained predominant; but it struck into the allegorical, or into contemplative poetry, or depicted pious feelings: it also became more and more lyric. The theatrical attributes, dresses, dances, pantomime, fell off altogether; and the lyric element became a fundamental characteristic of the whole species. But the essential difference from the *Song*, the *Ode*, is, that the dramatic element is combined with it. The *Song*, the *Ode*, depict and create *one main feeling*; but this is not enough for the Oratorio; it is too great a composition for this;

* The word Oratorio is used in this country more vaguely than elsewhere; every concert, in which sacred pieces are performed, being thus called. Eds.

too much power, too many means, are applied : for each feeling can very well be elevated to a certain degree, without striking into a new one ; but beyond that it tires, and becomes fatigued ; and the composition appears monotonous : and this is sooner the case, than even the shortest Oratorio could be brought to a conclusion. The circle of feelings in it must be sufficiently extended to combine the tendency of the first with other tendencies of life, to create a struggle between the different tendencies, ending with the victory of the original powerful feeling.

In whatever way this may be conceived or executed, this struggle will always create a variety of effects, approaching the dramatic character ; nay, entirely dramatic, only without scenery and action. This same life pervades the Cantata. It is not a mere annexing of different feelings one to the other ; it is an expression of the feelings, wishes, and hopes, of different hearts, on the same subject. The Oratorio goes farther ; it requires a more highly wrought story, a commixture of different interests. Differently situated individuals, with different views and objects of life, seeking their happiness of life in different, nay, opposite ways, coming into contact for *one* object, the victory over the other party ; all these must be in the Oratorio : and consequently, to make the whole clear without theatrical representation, there must be a certain historical thread, on which every thing is strung. The more seldom this thread appears in actual narrative, and the more the progression of the action appears from the succession of the feelings of the different characters, the more effect the Oratorio will have ; for its story is only to pass before the mind's eye, not before the external one. It is necessary therefore that the hearer be acquainted with the history of the subject of the Oratorio ; for he would otherwise have to exert the whole activity of his imagination to follow the action, and be prevented from yielding it up to the feelings excited by the text and the music. Therefore the individual characters must be drawn as distinctly as possible, and nowhere, by word or tone, be run together. One feeling must also naturally follow the other, in order that the hearer may easily conceive and trace it. The tying and unravelling of the knot will be even more important here than in the drama : because the subjects are known, and can only create lively interest by their successive gradation. The labor of the composer must not be augmented by too long spun comparisons or contemplations, or by a rhythm which does not observe logical cadences at the end

of the verses. A change of metres is desirable. The situations must not be too fully depicted; for that is as bad as being too brief. All allegories must be short, as well as the narratives: for the composer can only put them into Recitatives; which are tedious, if they come too often. Every thing referring to the action must for the same reason be short: feelings only are to be developed *in extenso*, nor these with many words. Biblical subjects are the best, for this reason also, that they are the best known to the auditor.

For rational hearers, a genuine Oratorio will even be preferable to the Opera addressed to the senses: the external feelings are less attracted; the internal ones, more; the hearer is led to greater coöperation, having himself to imagine the course of action: the rational enjoyment is fresher; not being led away so much by the external. Is an age, however, given up to the senses, then these preferences become disadvantages, which at the present time are evaded only by amusing the senses with great brilliancy of powerful instrumentation, which nullifies the more sober advantages of the Oratorio. But this evil will remedy itself by overleaping.

If an Oratorio be, above all things, not too long; if it be attractive, poetically and musically, by distinct characters of persons and feelings; and be herein, as well as in style itself, purer than any Opera; if it observe, besides, the best possible change of situations, with clear depth of feeling, expressed in corresponding melodies; it will find friends, as long as music shall exist.

MEMOIRS AND ESSAYS OF GRETRY.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH.

[Continued.]

I SHALL add to this letter, that in order to form a pupil, it is essential to make him comprehend with precision the exact punctuation of music.

One might without doubt assign what ought to be strictly the note of the scale, which ought to have relation to a certain sign of punctuation in discourse; and mark a difference between the note of exclamation and of interrogation; and another between the period, the colon and the comma; but this would be to impose shackles upon

sentiment, from which it would always be escaping. The best reader or declaimer is he who best makes you feel what he says : it is not the same with the musician ; a sort of liberty must by absolute necessity exist in the arts ; the ignorant abuse it, but the man of genius profits from it.

The following is a means, little used, which I have employed with success. We take good instrumental music ; and in playing it, or in sol-fa'ing the singing parts, we seek all the known signs of punctuation : nevertheless, as I have before said, the exclamation and the interrogation are easily taken for each other ; the difference scarcely exists except in the sign, and very little in the accent of the voice.

This exercise accustoms the pupil to be precise, and to reject phrases equivocal with relation to the words. Vocal music which wearies, is almost always punctuated so as to destroy the sense, and it is the greatest torment that a sensible ear can experience.

I have given my daughter several music masters, and shall change them still. I know she will not draw much benefit from it, if she is destined to be only a common-place composer. I know that she will entangle herself in the different systems which her masters shall present to her ; but what of that ? I like better that she should lose herself and remain buried in this superabundance, than that she should become the copyist of one single man. But if nature has destined her to be something of herself, she will have wherefrom to choose, and will be able to put to profit even the contradictions that exist in this and that system. The pupil should see all, know all, compare all ; it is from this chaos that he forms for himself a manner and a style. It is thus that, having learned every thing from his masters, nature must correct every thing in him, in order to render him original.

The masters of harmony teach my daughter only harmonic phrases ; I alone tell her where and how they should be employed.

I often repeat to her the principles spread through these essays ; I encourage her by telling her, that there is a melody towards which she is impelled ; that youth has a thousand sensations to reveal to us through melody, while the artist, although experienced, yet worn out and frozen by age, has no longer scarcely any thing to tell us in this charming language.

There are, I tell her, two sorts of melody ; the first is that which sensibility gives ; which subsists only with it and like it. I mean that the puerile sensibility of the old man no longer has any of the charms of that of the youthful age.

Nevertheless, this flower, so beautiful, has need of a stem to sustain it. This stem is harmony, which is only acquired by the study of the combination of sounds.

The second is a sort of scholastic melody, which one learns to make by the study of counterpoint and harmony. This, always correct, is what is called well written music, which has only a certain number of favorers; but the first pleases every body, though it often rejects the shackles of rules too severe.

Harmony might also be regarded under two relations. There is, in fact, a harmony which charms our soul; but is it not because it is produced by the melody which it contains? The other is only a succession of sounds methodically placed; of which, however, the artist sometimes makes use to shade his picture, by furnishing means of repose for the sensibility of his auditors, which he must take care not to exhaust.

I have somewhere said that a chord is found by a process of art, but that we know no process for creating a strain of melody. The man who possesses the talent of making successful songs, might nevertheless be able to mould, in this enchanting art, a pupil already favored by nature.

Let us examine for an instant this most delicate part of the musical art, and which has hitherto been taught only with relation to harmony; for the pupil is very soon taught to arrange the parts between, which constitute the counterpoint or the fugue: but here harmony is not the thing in question; the business is to accustom the pupil to choose, among certain notes of the scale, those which shall have the most pleasing effect in their combinations, in order to form a song for a single voice. This agreeable song will no doubt be susceptible of a base, or of more or less harmony to fill up; but it is at first to this song alone that every thing must be sacrificed.

Have we not remarked that the most popular airs are those which embrace the least space, the fewest notes, the shortest diapason or compass? Witness almost all the airs which time has respected; they are of this character. It is necessary then to direct the pupil, in leaving him master of his motions, to make songs with four, five, or six notes. The seventh note of the scale is harsh, unless we make the sounds succeed each other, as we have shown the ancients did.

With a master sensible to melody, I have no doubt that a choice pupil may be accustomed to make successful songs, for which he

cannot render a reason, but which nevertheless charm us. Let not this occupation be thought dry and trifling; it is so flattering to do much with little means. Racine, putting together a few words common to all the world, took pleasure without doubt while making immortal verse. Besides, a happy strain of melody is almost always a sally of the soul, which it is necessary to be able to seize, while giving one's self, however, the trouble of seeking it. The composer who knows his trade, may make, of a morning, twelve or fifteen measures of harmony, proof to all criticism; but I do not advise any one to promise in a week an air sufficiently happy to be seized by every body, and be sung in the streets.

A skilful instructor, I mean one who follows nature, and has no beaten track, ought to study each pupil which he wishes to form. If he is quick, if he has an easy memory, he will retain better the things than the words which represent them. Beware, in this case, of making vain efforts to fix methodically in his brain the rules which you prescribe. Beware of restraining him in a sphere too limited, by wishing to inculcate one thing at a time. The impulses ought to be light, always different, and proportioned to the weakness of the constitution which receives them. Present to him always ideas that are within his reach; keep technical terms out of sight. When you have often shown him the elements of the branch of the art which you are teaching, it is himself that will give them the order that they ought to have; he will do it, sooner or later, and will never forget it. The first idea will recall the second, this the third, and so on.

One day I saw a young Miss, who was weeping; her mother told me with sorrow, that her daughter's music-master had not been able, in three months, to teach her the value of the notes. 'That is very easy,' said I to the girl: 'Have you some money in your purse?' 'Yes, Sir.' 'Give it me: what do you call this?' 'It is a *sou*.' 'Right.' I put it on the table. 'Give me now a *sou* in two pieces of money.' She looked at me, and said: 'Is it two *half-sous* that you want?' 'Yes.' 'Here they are.' I put them beside the single *sou*. 'Which is worth the most,' said I, 'this *sou*, or these two *half-sous*?' 'Oh! you are joking,' said she, 'they are the same thing.' 'True,' said I: 'Give me now a *sou*, which I wish to give to four poor little children.' 'One *sou* for four little children! four *liards* would be better; they would each have one.' 'You are right. There are again eight little children in another house, but

I only wish to give them one *sou* to divide among them, and that seems to me to be difficult.' 'Yes, very difficult,' said she; 'for that cannot;' and she began to study. 'Oh! let us give one *liard* to two children.' 'Yes,' said I, 'but each one will want to keep it in his pocket: they will quarrel!' 'That is true: why did they not make *half-liards* too?' 'They have them in my country,' said I. 'Well, send for some.' 'Yes, and in the mean time, we will put on the table some little pieces of paper in their place.'

The good mother smiled during the lesson. 'Well, Miss,' said I to her daughter, 'you know the value of the notes as well as your master: I have changed their names, because they were too difficult to remember: take some paper and write what I dictate to you.'

'The semibreve is called a *sou*; the minim, a *half-sou*; and it takes two *half-sous* to make a *sou*. The crotchet is called a *liard*; it takes two of them for a *half-sou*, and four for a *sou*. The quaver is called a *half-liard*; it takes two *half-liards* to make a *liard*, four *half-liards* to make two *liards*, and eight *half-liards* for four *liards*.

This detail is childish, but it must be so for a child of four or five years.

Before reducing the sounds to any value whatever, pupils are exercised upon intonation merely; that is to say, they are made to sing notes before beating time. I ask, if it would not be very useful to teach them what they do not know, by something which they know already; that is, by making them sol-fa the little airs they know by heart. I know a young miss, who, being obliged to go into the country after a few months' lessons, took it into her head, without any one giving her the idea, to sol-fa the country-dances which she danced on holidays. On her return to Paris, her master, much astonished, was far from thinking she had lost her time.* Let us remark, that the first solfeggio exercises which are given to children are only notes taken almost at hazard: we give them, even purposely, songs without meaning, for fear their ear should guide them rather than their understanding: but this means is irksome; when,

* What Grétry here speaks of, has been put in execution by Mr. Galin, author of the *Meloplast*, in his method both for intonation and time; and it has strong relation to this thought of Condillac: "If you wish to make me conceive of ideas which I do not know, you must take me to the ideas which I have; it is from what I know, that what I do not know must begin." ED. ORIG.

on the contrary, by making them write down and sol-fa themselves the air which they know by heart, and which recalls to them the pleasures of the dance, it is a much more sure means of instructing them, by amusing them.

If your pupil is of a grave, taciturn character, if he is not lively, it is probable that he has hindrance, thickness of the brain. You will ruin him, if you wish to force him to comprehend: this is wishing to fill him too full. What must be done in such a case? Learn him nothing, but teach the other children before him, and encourage them in his presence. He will wish to join them some day: he will ask for it; he will resume and quit his occupations a hundred times; and the little voluntary impulses which this will give to the fibres of his brain, will probably cure him of his malady, and will perhaps make a man of spirit of him; whereas, a forced education would certainly have made him an imbecile.

As to performers, nature hardly ever gives two voices similar in their extent. Besides, each musician piques himself on singing a tone above his neighbor: the Italian female singers, the unapproachables, already strike half the third octave; this, however, must have an end, and people must return to nature.

Nature, always uniform, has given to woman a register of voice softer than that of man. There exists between the two a sensible difference, which we appreciate at an octave. Each of these voices is subject to modifications, so that they are classed as follows:—female voices, first and second sopranos: for men, base and tenor. The only difference that there can be in each of these, consists in modifications, either in the low sounds or in the high ones. A few sounds more or less in the extent of a voice, cannot establish a distinction of register other than those which we have specified.

ROSSINI AND HIS NEW OPERA.

AN artist presenting a new offspring of his genius before the bar of public opinion, has indeed to suffer tortures, before he becomes sure of its success. He has fearful antagonists to encounter. First, the hundred headed, never resting *cabal*, with its ugly companions, *envy* and *jealousy*: they undermine, slyly and unperceived, the foundation on which he builds his hopes; and how often do they

succeed, before he is aware, in destroying it altogether. Then there are *pedantry* and *prejudice*, through whose chill hearts the glow of fresh, warm feeling cannot penetrate: they measure, tear and cut, the proportions of the young creature, until they have rendered it a cripple; when they contemptuously throw it aside. Then comes *ignorance*, and bestows on it fresh abuse; for it has no independent judgment, and trusts blindfold to that of the most fickle and light-minded of all things, *fashion*.

All these obstacles, the composer, above all others, has to encounter; for the ear neither has mathematical certainty of judgment, nor the power to conceive at once the whole of a large work of art: both which faculties are of so great assistance to the eye, in judging of the productions of the plastic arts. Moreover, the composer has to leave the production of his genius to the execution of others, who, for aught he knows, may not at all have understood his intentions. It is therefore very natural, that even the greatest composers, who know their own merits as well as the world knows them, should look forward to the first performance of a new composition of magnitude, especially an opera, with great excitement: but brilliant genius will surmount all these obstacles, and command admiration. These remarks may serve as an introduction to the following anecdote of the *Mäestro Rossini*.

He returned, in 1817, to Milan, after an absence of two years; during which he had produced in Naples his *Elizabetta*, and in Rome his immortal *Barber of Seville*; and had just won new laurels by his *Cenerentola*, [*Cinderella*.]

The great composer was in painful uncertainty, how the good people of Milan would receive him, whose idol he had formerly been, and whom he had left, in spite of favors and entreaties, to present the productions of his genius at other theatres. This preference was a deadly offence to the dignity and taste of the city, an offence which *Italians* would not easily forgive. To reinstate himself in their favor, he wrote a new work, his *Gazza Ladra*, [*Magpie and Maid*.]

On the eve of its first representation, when Rossini was preparing himself to go to the theatre, a friend called on him, whose whole behaviour exhibited the greatest alarm. "Why," said Rossini, "what is the matter?"

"O, my friend!—it is horrible!—poor composer!—this fine work!"

"Well, but my dear Sir, what is the trouble?"

"O! what misfortune! such an opera! such a splendid composition, to be hissed down!"

"What, hissed?"

"Yes, my friend; you must know that an immense cabal is entered into against you; the public, offended at your leaving Milan, and producing your two last operas elsewhere, are resolved to take signal revenge: your new opera is to be hissed down to-night, in an unheard of manner."

Rossini made no answer, but to shrug his shoulders, and went to the theatre, where he took his place as usual at the piano in the orchestra.

When he was perceived, there arose a rather ominous murmur. He looked around, but he saw no faces smiling upon him: nay, he thought he saw them preparing for their hissing operations. Meanwhile, he had to begin: he struck the first chord nervously on the piano-forte, and the Orchestra performed the beautiful March with which the Overture begins, in excellent style. All was silent,—the Allegro follows—the trembling Rossini hardly dares to breathe: his bewildered imagination expects every moment to hear the hissing, and the piccolo-flute, whenever it comes in, gives him a regular start. The Overture is finished, the Introduction sung, and yet the tempest has not broken loose. At last, Ninetta descends the hill, and Rossini's supplicating looks implore her to do her best. She sung, and the words "*bene, multo bene; bravo, ah bravo!*" were repeatedly heard; and the threatening physiognomies began to clear up. At last, after the Trio between Ninetta, Fernando, and the Padesta, an immense peal of applause arose, and "*Bravo Maestro! Viva Rossini!*" were heard from all sides. According to custom, Rossini rose and bowed to the audience; the applause continued, and peace seemed to be reëstablished between the public and its favorite.

In fact, almost every piece in the Opera was immensely cheered; the author had constantly to rise and bow; and after the piece was over, the triumphant Rossini had to keep his chamber for a week, not in consequence of despondency, but of joyous excitement.

ON THE PRESERVATION OF THE VOICE.

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN.

To take proper care of the voice is of so much importance to every singer, that the greatest attention should be paid to all the means for its preservation, and to every species of indisposition that tends to injure it. There are but few maladies that affect the organs of the voice alone, as the greater part of the troubles to which it is liable, are merely symptoms or parts of other complicated diseases. In every case of this kind, a judicious singer will at once seek the advice of an experienced physician, without making the matter worse by trying to cure himself, or by resorting to quacks. We will therefore only touch upon the lighter diseases of the voice, and show how they must be treated.

One of the most common affections of the voice is *hoarseness*, causing it to lose in volume of sound, and in distinctness and precision of tone. The origin of hoarseness is often catarrhal, in which case it must be treated as a catarrh. It is, however, frequently caused by speaking or singing too much; when it arises from the dryness of the larynx, and the consequent relaxation of its muscles. In this case, singing must be postponed for some time, to give room for those parts to recover the necessary power and humidity. They may also be assisted in it, by the application of gently softening and moistening remedies, such as gargling with lukewarm elder tea and honey. Hoarseness is very often the consequence of a faulty respiration; when the vowel tone is not brought out with proper economy of breath; when it is produced more by a forcible discharge from off the lungs, than by a quiet emission of the breath. The necessary moisture is driven away from the vocal cords; and an irritation is felt, which produces frequent coughing. This cough takes away the flexibility of the voice, and may destroy its organs prematurely: nay, it may be very detrimental to the chest itself. Hoarseness from swallowing very fat meats or drinks, will lose itself in a short time after this stimulus has ceased.

Sometimes it is the symptom of more serious indisposition, especially of consumption. But upon this we can only so far touch, as to give the following rules. If hoarseness comes often, and from every little cause, from every little exertion of the voice, there is reason to be seriously alarmed for the chest, and carefully to avoid

every thing that might hurt it : for this often repeated and continued hoarseness is a certain sign, if not of decided consumption, at least of great weakness in the chest, and a tendency to all the ills connected with it.

United to hoarseness is generally another defect of the voice, *roughness*, which is caused by too much or too little moisture in the breathing passages, or by a natural unevenness of them, or arising from sickness. It comes from the same causes as hoarseness, and is remedied by the same means. Good domestic remedies for it are the yolk of an egg, with sugar and a little claret. To add alcohol to it is not good for every organ : it creates an unpleasant irritation and cough. Honey and liquorice, taken in small quantities, are useful ; but they easily produce a stopping of the passages of the chest and throat with phlegm. Tea with sugar is beneficial to some organs, but very often produces greater roughness of voice. Gargling with warm elder tea, and inhaling the vapor of tea, are recommended in such cases. After applying these remedies internally, it is very beneficial to wash the neck with lukewarm water ; and to rub it with flannel after it is thoroughly dry. When the organ of the voice becomes dry by too much exercise of it, or the necessary mucus is taken from the vocal cords, this mucus will very seldom be fully restored by artificial means. The best remedy in this case is, to chew a piece of hard bread or cracker, until it makes a moist paste ; eat this paste slowly, and drink a few swallows of moderately cold water after it. This simple remedy is applied by the best singers with good success. Strong spirituous drinks, such as brandy, rum, &c., are, by their astringent effect, particularly apt to cause roughness of the voice, which will be easily observed. The only remedy in this case is, to abstain from them altogether. The singer has especially to be very careful in the selection of the *beer* he may drink. It is a very common but mistaken error, committed by bass singers in particular, to think that beer is beneficial to the voice. The sound of the high and middle tones is always endangered by it, and though the lower tones may apparently gain in volume, they generally become *rough* and *hard*. Where roughness is natural, or arises from climate, (in the north it is almost epidemic), very little can be done to amend it. Correct respiration, and careful solfeggio singing, can alone aid, and this in a limited measure.

Catarrh has its origin mostly in a cold, and requires therefore

warmth, and remedies that excite perspiration ; such as elder tea, balm tea, oftentimes made stronger by elderberry jam, &c. The same is to be observed of all those ills that are connected with, and are a consequence of, catarrhs ; as cough, sore throat, swelling of the external and internal glands of the neck, of the tonsils of the throat, of the glottis ; local remedies merely may be called in to aid these local indispositions ; gargling with elder tea, honey, &c. ; and if the evil is deeper down in the throat, inhaling the vapor of tea. External applications of camomile bags are advisable, especially for swellings of the glands. But above all things, the throat must be kept warm, by day and night. To wrap the neck in flannel, and to wash both it and the chest with lukewarm brandy, are useful for this purpose. Asthma, and want of breath, if occasioned by weakness of the chest, require the treatment of a physician. Domestic remedies may do much harm ; but correct practice of singing, under the direction of a teacher acquainted with physiology, will most certainly contribute materially to the strengthening of the organs of respiration, provided there be no natural defect in their construction.

From these rules, in cases of indisposition of the throat, the reader may deduce for himself, for the most part, what he has to do for the preservation of his voice, and we will only add the following remarks. The most important thing to be observed is, the condition of the body when singing, and the manner of singing. Never sing while indisposed, particularly in the organs of the voice : never sing immediately after running fast, or after riding, lifting, or similar bodily exertion ; when the voice is not at command, is wavering, incorrect, or panting ; which may have very bad consequences withal. Never sing immediately before or after meals ; for it hurts both the voice and the health together. Never talk or sing too long : it will raise an irritation, a burning, a pricking in the throat or chest ; which are always signs of the approach of a state of indisposition. During singing, stand free and easy ; and do not hold any thing before the mouth, which might prevent the free flow of the breath, and thus weaken the chest and deaden the tone. The chest must always be held freely erect, that the lungs may expand ; strengthening the breath, and giving more ease to the song. Never, or at least very seldom, touch the extreme limits of your power of voice. Frequent repetition of this over-singing might produce a sudden and entire loss of voice. Do not sing in a place either too

cold or too warm ; so as to lose the proper proportion of warmth between the breath inhaled and exhaled. A singer must be more moderate than any body else in eating and drinking, for the sake of the preservation of his voice ; and this precious treasure is well worth such a privation. This is particularly applicable to Tenor, Soprano, and Alto voices : the Bass voice is not so delicate. As to the choice of meats and drinks, prefer the lighter and milder articles, and avoid all that is very fat, and even rich fruit, nuts, &c., all strong spirituous drinks, &c. Tobacco-smoking does not hurt the voice, if used moderately ; nay, it may be of material use, by promoting the secretion and discharge of the phlegm from the organs of breathing, and thus making the voice purer and clearer. Snuff-taking, however, stops up the canals, obstructing the resonance of the tone, and consequently making it weaker ; and it should therefore be avoided by the singer. He should be so dressed as to keep the body as equally warm as possible, to prevent being either heated or taking cold ; both of which necessarily hurt the voice : but he should also be dressed with ease and comfort, particularly in those parts which are active in singing, as the throat and chest ; in order to allow them a free and unmolested motion : otherwise, by being compressed in their action, they would injure the health. Practice on wind instruments is not admissible for the singer ; his breath, and the strength of his chest, belong to his voice, and must be preserved for it. Lastly, take great care for the preservation of the teeth. Their decay and loss will take away the chief instrument for the resonance of the voice ; and this loss will be felt the more, as it prevents the perfect and clear articulation of the words. The singer must therefore do nothing which would hurt the teeth.

THE CONCERTS.

WEDNESDAY, Jan. 9. The Boston Academy of Music gave its Third Concert for the season, the distinguishing features of which were, the introduction of Mr. Grotto before a Boston audience, and the increase of Instrumental Music in the performances. Both these circumstances meet our hearty approbation, and, we doubt not, that of the public. We like to see performers from abroad introduced to public notice through the means of our musical societies, and wish that the practice might be generally adopted, and that performers from other places might have to pass

the touchstone of public opinion in these Concerts, before they thrust themselves upon the public on their own account, founding on a reputation sustained only by rumor, and too often self-trumpeted.

Mr. Greatorex, the son of an eminent London musician, has lately come to this country, and established himself as a Professor of Music and Organist, at Hartford, Conn. In his performances he showed the advantages of a good musical education. He possesses an agreeable, though not a powerful bass voice, and sings in very good taste. The Adagio of Pergolesi's song in particular, was performed very well, and with great feeling. On the Piano, as well as on the Organ, he evinced a good touch; all his notes coming out round and distinct. The taste he exhibited on these instruments was not equal to that which characterized his singing; and his accompaniment of the Violoncello was too loud.

The Duett by the two ladies we presume was a first attempt, and a good deal of the impurity of the intonation must be attributed to the embarrassment which is natural in such cases. We would recommend to them the careful study of the intervals, as the best means of overcoming that embarrassment, and the only means of being sure to sing in tune. A singer must know by heart the distance of the tones, so that he needs not to feel his way by the piano, but has the whole scale, and every note of it, immediately at command in his head, as soon as the chord is given. This can only be acquired by constant practice of the intervals.

We were much pleased with the young lady's execution of the triplets in the Glee by Spofforth, although she was a little flat in restoring D natural, after it had been struck sharp. The Swiss Song and Chorus was well arranged, and well sung.

SATURDAY, Jan. 12. The Concert of the Italian Band we were prevented from attending, by other engagements. We understand that they are good players, and go well together; giving fine expression to the Music: and they may, perhaps, have made good their assertion, that they would produce music beyond the power of any other musicians here to equal, whether natives or foreigners.

SUNDAY, Jan. 13. The beautiful serious *Opera* of Joseph and his Brethren, by Mehul, was performed by the Musical Institute. We were, on the whole, well satisfied with the performance, although the same difficulty was observable, which is almost invariably to be met with in the performances of our musical societies, a deficiency in the solo singers. We are aware that they are not generally professional singers, and that their performances are not to be criticised as such; but the conviction is almost always forced upon us, that they possess the ability to perform their parts far better, and might do so, if they would practise them more, and put themselves more particularly under the direction of those connected with the societies who were educated to the profession. This *Opera* requires several solo voices, and among all that performed we can only mention Joseph, as having a good voice, and singing correctly and in

good taste. The part of Benjamin, written for a female voice, was performed by a lady, who, without a voice of much power or expression, sang correctly, and in some parts pleasingly. Jacob was sung correctly, but without any attempt at expression. The brothers were all in comparatively weak hands, though in different degrees; and Simeon, in particular, will have to study his part over again.

The Choruses were generally well performed; so well, that we shall not take notice of a failure in the Alto, in "O pardon us, our father," near the end. The Chorus singers appeared firm in their parts, although they had no Organ to aid them.

This Opera is a beautiful composition. The following pieces are particularly so:—the two Romanza's of Joseph and Benjamin; Joseph's first Air; the Quartette of Jacob, Joseph, Benjamin, and Uthol; and "O Joseph, my son;" which pieces cannot fail to delight every hearer.

The house was well filled. Several of the audience, however, showed so much haste to leave, that they greatly annoyed those who wished to listen to the end, by rising and adjusting their great coats before the music was finished.

ANECDOTE OF MADEMOISELLE GRISI.

This lady was engaged in London, several years since, at a certain number of guineas for each appearance. Madame Malibran came there, and stipulated for forty guineas more a night. The year after, Mademoiselle Grisi, with the true pride of an artist, refused to engage at a less price than that which had been paid to her illustrious rival. She obtained it; but, to prove that her disinterestedness equalled the sense she had of her own merit, she sent each evening to the poor the *forty* additional guineas. This deed, which we are happy to add to so many others so honorable to artists, was vouched for to us by a witness who was then in England, and whose veracity we cannot suspect. [*Gazette Musicale, Paris.*]

A correspondent will accept our thanks for a communication on the Messiah, sent us in the prospect that that Oratorio would be performed by the Handel and Haydn Society, on Sunday evening, the 6th instant. The limited selections which were performed, and the length of time which has elapsed since, we presume will be regarded as a sufficient apology for not inserting it.